

Saddleback Ridge Wind, LLC // Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA) and Site Location of Development Act applications

- January 21, 2011 letter from James Brooks to Rufus Brown denying request for public hearing



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

JAMES P. BROOKS
ACTING COMMISSIONER

January 21, 2011

Rufus Brown and other Interested Parties
Browne & Burke
P.O. Box 7530
Portland, Maine 04112

**RE: SADDLEBACK RIDGE WIND PROJECT, DEP FILE #L-25137-24-A-N/#L-25137-TG-B-N
SADDLEBACK RIDGE WIND, LLC, CARTHAGE, DIXFIELD AND CANTON**

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your interest regarding the above-referenced applications. Saddleback Ridge Wind, LLC has filed a Natural Resource Protection Act and a Site Location of Development Act application for the proposed project, known as the Saddleback Ridge Wind Project, in the Towns of Carthage, Dixfield and Canton. The proposed project is for a 33-megawatt (MW) wind power project, consisting of 12 wind turbines on Saddleback Ridge, electrical collection infrastructure, an electrical substation, a transmission line, an operations and maintenance building, and other features. These applications are currently pending and under evaluation by Department staff who will ultimately make a recommendation to me on an appropriate decision.

Your letter on behalf of Friends of Maine's Mountains and other interested parties requests that I hold a public hearing for this proposed project based upon concerns about the proposed project's sound level study, the scenic character of the area, and other issues. The standard for holding such a hearing is found in the Department's *Rules Concerning the Processing of Applications and Other Administrative Matters*, 06-096 CMR 2, which specifies that "the Department will hold public hearings in those instances where the Department determines there is credible conflicting technical information regarding a licensing criteria and it is likely that a public hearing will assist the decision-maker in understanding the evidence." Your request has been considered carefully; however, much of the information you have submitted has been considered by the Department in previous applications and to the extent you have submitted new information I find that it is not sufficient to warrant a public hearing. As such, a public hearing is not appropriate.

However, it is important that the interested members of the public be provided the opportunity to express their concerns to the Department and have those concerns entered into the record for this project. Due to this public interest the Department will hold a public meeting, pursuant to 38 M.R.S.A. § 345-A (5).

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This public meeting will provide all interested parties with an opportunity to provide information and ask questions of the Department. All information expressed at this meeting will become a part of the Department's record. The public meeting will be scheduled for mid-February in the area of the project. In addition to this letter you will receive specific notice of the public meeting and notice will be published in the public notice section of the Sun Journal.

The Department looks forward to your participation in the public meeting, and welcomes and will consider all comments received during the review of the pending applications.

If you have further questions, please contact the project manager, Mark Margerum at 287-7842 or via e-mail at Mark.T.Margerum@maine.gov.

Sincerely,



James P. Brooks
Acting Commissioner

Cc: Mark Margerum, MDEP

(By email to interested parties list)

